

The Cheerful Letter

• EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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COMING.

*"At even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in
the morning."*

It may be in the evening,
When the work of the day is done,
And you have time to sit in the twilight
And watch the sinking sun,
While the long bright day dies slowly
Over the sea,
And the hours grow quiet and holy
With thoughts of Me,
While you hear the village children
Passing along the street,
Among those thronging footsteps
May come the sound of My feet.
Therefore, I tell you: Watch
By the light of the evening star,
When the room is growing dusky
As the clouds afar;
Let the door be on the latch
In your home,
For it may be through the gloaming
I will come.

It may be when the midnight
Is heavy upon the land
And the black waves lying dumbly
Along the sand,
When the moonless night draws close
And the lights are out in the house,

When the fires burn low and red,
And the watch is ticking loudly
Beside the bed,
Though you sleep, tired out, on your couch,
Still your heart must wake and watch
In the dark room,
For it may be that at midnight
I will come.

It may be at the cock-crow
When the night is dying slowly
In the sky,
And the sea looks calm and holy,
Waiting for the dawn
Of the golden sun
Which draweth nigh,
When the mists are on the valleys, shading
The rivers chill,
And My morning star is fading, fading,
Over the hill,
Behold I say unto you: Watch,
Let the door be on the latch
In your home;
In the chill before the dawning,
Between the night and morning,
I may come.

It may be in the morning,
When the sun is bright and strong,
And the dew is glittering sharply
Over the lawn,
When the waves are laughing loudly
Along the shore,
And the little birds are singing sweetly
About the door,
With the long day's work before you,
You rise up with the sun,
And the neighbors come in to talk a little
Of all that must be done;
But remember that I may be the next
To come in at the door,
To call you from all your busy work
Forevermore;
As you work, your heart must watch
For the door is on the latch
In your room,
And it may be in the morning
I may come.

So He passed down my cottage garden,
By the path that leads to the sea,
Till He came to the turn of the little road
Where the birch and laburnum-tree
Lean over and arch the way;
There I saw Him a moment stay

And turn once more to me
 As I wept at the cottage door,
 And lift up His hands in blessing,
 Then I saw His face no more.
 And I stood still in the doorway,
 Leaning against the wall,
 Not heeding the fair white roses,
 Though I crushed them and let them fall,
 Only looking down the pathway
 And looking toward the sea,
 And wondering, and wondering,
 When He would come back to me,
 Till I was aware of an angel
 Who was coming quickly by,
 With the gladness of one who goeth
 In the light of God most high.

He passed the end of the cottage
 Toward the garden gate
 (I suppose he was coming down
 At the setting of the sun
 To comfort some one in the village
 Whose dwelling was desolate);
 And he paused before the door
 Beside my place,
 And the likeness of a smile
 Was on his face.
 "Weep not," he said, "for unto you is given
 To watch for the coming of His feet
 Who is the glory of our blessed heaven;
 The work and watching will be very sweet
 Even in an earthly home;
 And, in such an hour as you think not,
 He will come."

So I am watching quietly
 Every day;
 Whenever the sun rises brightly,
 I rise and say,
 "Surely it is the shining of His face,"
 And look into the gates of His high place,
 Beyond the sea;
 For I know He is coming shortly
 To summon me.
 And, when a shadow falls across the window
 Of my room,
 When I am working my appointed task,
 I lift my head to watch the door and ask
 If He is come;
 And the angel answers sweetly
 In my home,
 "Only a few more shadows
 And He will come."

THE THREE IDEAS OF JESUS.

Three things Jesus believed and taught with such simplicity and sincerity that he seems hardly to have known how great they were. He seems never to have thought out the hard things he was to do, and then say, "Now this I believe, and this I will do." But without effort, apparently, he received and acted upon three revolutionary ideas.

In the first place, he acted as if he really

believed that God was the infinite and loving Father of the human race. We hear much in our time about the lack of originality in Jesus. We are told that all his sayings may be found scattered through the writings of prophets and sages. Perhaps they may. Certainly, some had called God a father before Jesus came. The peculiarity of his teaching was that he lived as if he believed what he said. He did not say, Now I will set you an example, I will show you how to live; but out of an inner and sublimer impulse he simply lived so that in all the ages since the world has been taking example therefrom. One peculiarity of his trust in God as Father—a peculiarity which was the source of constant strength and comfort—was that he regarded himself as set to do the Father's business. Commonly, men say: "If God is my Father, I have the right to ask favors of Him. I have a right to ask Him to carry out my plans. From Him I may expect prosperity and happiness." But from Jesus comes no such word. His thought was so high, so noble, so true, that it has never been impeached by any discovery of science or any doubt of philosophy.

Something like this would be the modern form of his teaching. There are going on above the thoughts of men, in the upper regions of that mighty world of which we are part, processes which greatly concern the sons of men. On the earth there are evils to be abolished, there are good things to come, there is great and honorable work for those who are willing. In the progress of the world we may have a part; in the work going on in the high places we may have a share. God's business is our business. That is to say, in his thought of Sonship there was none of the weakness of that sentimentality that has often made the gospel an offence. In Jesus it was a virile sentiment: it meant work, courage, a high purpose, and such absorption in the object for which he lived that he scarcely stopped to think whether the events of the day were or were not such as he had a right to expect. "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straightened until it be accomplished." That has been ever since the cry of the brave men who have shown that humanity is a divine thing, and that God is the everlasting Father of the race.

But this was not the only thing in which he was unique, the only one of his kind. He also lived as if the other part of Sonship

was a truth. He actually lived as if he believed that every man was his brother, that every woman was his sister, that every child was a member of the family to which he belonged, and had as good a right in the Father's house as he had. There had been talk about brotherhood in the world before that, but it was brotherhood with a limitation. Kings and queens were brothers and sisters; philosophers had their brotherhood; the rich recognized the tie of kindred; the wise and good admitted each other to fellowship; those who were of one church, then as now, called each other brother and sister. But he lived, thought, felt, and acted as if, when it came to these differences, he did not know the difference. To me that is the supreme miracle in the life of Jesus. He could treat the worst kind of a woman with as much consideration as if she were a high-born and self-respecting lady, and seem not to know the difference, and yet with such divine discretion that all the woman in her responded to the call of kinship and duty.

He seemed to be repelled by no one but the hypocrite. The bad man who made a smooth profession of piety, while he sat in judgment on the sinful, stirred him to wrath. He smote through the mask of hypocrisy, and swept away the last refuge of the pretender. Doubtless his denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees has been much exaggerated. Those who wrote his memoirs bitterly resented the treatment he received from them. He did denounce them, but never for his own sake. Always he stood between them and the poor, the unfortunate and the sinful. His very scorn of scorn, his hate of hate, was an assertion of the brotherhood which they despised.

But another thing he did and said by which more than by any other assertion ever made through human act and speech he has shaped, moulded, and controlled the course of human destiny. He lived in the sight of all men up to the high level of the belief that man is an indestructible creature, that he came out of the Infinite and the Eternal Being, and shares the fortunes of the Infinite and the Eternal. It was no mere assertion that for every man there is a life to come. That is a statement merely, and may have in it no religious significance whatever.

Jesus said little about the doctrine; but he and Paul, who came after him, trans- fused all preaching and conversation and

action with the red blood, the vitality, the electric energy, of the conviction that the essence, the reality, the real life of a human being is indestructible.—*George Batchelor, in the Christian Life.*

THE STILL HOUR.

The quiet of a shadow-haunted pool,
Where light breaks through in glorious
tenderness,
Where the tranced pilgrim in the shelter cool
Forgets the way's distress;

Such is this hour, this silent hour with Thee!
The trouble of the restless heart is still,
And every swaying wish breathes reverently
The whisper of Thy will!

Father, our thoughts are rushing wildly on,
Tumultuous, clouded with their own vain
strife,
Darkened by cares from our own planting
grown;
We call the tumult life.

And something of Thy Presence still is given;
The keen light flashing from the seething
foam,
Through tangled boughs the sudden glimpse
of heaven,
From Thee, Thee only, come.

And beautiful it is to catch Thy smile
Amid the rush, the hurrying flow of mind,
To feel Thy glance upon us all the while,
Most Holy and most Kind!

But, oh! this hour of heavenly quietness,
When, as a lake that opens to the sky,
The soul, serene in its great blessedness,
Looks up to meet Thine eye!

Fountain of Life, in Thee alone is Light;
Shine through our being, cleansing us from
sin,
Till we grow lucid with Thy Presence bright,
The peace of God within.

Yet not alone as Light pervading come;
O Thou Divine One, meet us as a Friend!
Only with Thee is every heart at home;
Stay with us to the end!

By the stream's windings let us with Thee
talk
Of this strange earth-life Thou so well
hast known;
In Thy fresh footprints let us heavenward
walk,
Groping no more alone!

If in our thoughts, by Thee made calm and
clear,
The brightening image of Thy face we see,
What hour of all our lives can be so dear
As this still hour with Thee!

—*Lucy Larcom.*

Eternal self-communion is our destiny. Shall it be communion with selves that we must abhor or despise or with selves into which we can look with gratitude and gladness?—A. P. Peabody.

The universal love and the spirit of joyful service toward all is the strongest and holiest tie thou canst have with thy friend and begets the deepest satisfaction. . . . I come unto my friend as to a shrine, and my friend unto me.—*Trinities and Sanctities.*

The Christian Life is one of faith, hope, love, obedience,—the life of God in the soul of man. We are born into that life by a determination to obey God and do his will. We grow up by daily obedience, daily trust, daily prayer.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

All things else are uncertain, and we drift and wander in them,—life, love, hopes, fortune, fame, friends, all we pursued, day by day we lose. One thing only lasts,—God's work on our spirit, and the work we do by walking in his truth upon the world.—*Stopford A. Brooke.*

All great men have a curious under-sense of powerlessness, feeling that the greatness is not in them, but through them, that they could not do or be anything else than God made them. And they see something divine and God-made in every other man they meet.—*Ruskin.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 80 Goffe Street, Quincy, Mass.]

OFFERS.

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The Springfield Branch offers the following books. Address Miss Clara D. Hoar, Crescent Hill, Springfield, Mass. "Child's History of England," Dickens; Houston's "New Physical Geography"; Swinton's "Grammar School Geography"; "First

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REQUESTS.

Those who write to us for the first time must send the name and address of a minister as a reference. Without that the request will not be printed.

1. I would be grateful if some of the *Cheerful Letter* friends can send me a book of popular recitations. Any other reading will be gladly received. Emma Shearer, Turtletown, Tennessee.

2. Mrs. Nellie DeWitt, Little Beaver, Missouri, asks for books on Christ's Crucifixion.

3. Mrs. Mattie Alger, Newberg, Oregon, asks for "Red Mountains of Alaska."

4. Mrs. Annie Mercer, Pennsville, Ohio, will be glad of reading for herself, also for her boys, ages thirteen, eight, and four years.

5. "Pilgrim's Progress" is asked for by Miss Emma Little, Washington, North Carolina.

6. M. Ada Cannaday, Cambria, Virginia, is anxious to read "The Story of the Gospel," by Foster.

7. The address of Mrs. W. F. Galloway is now Dover, Craven County, North Carolina, where she hopes the friends will still remember her.

Mrs. R. H. Cook has moved from Queensboro, North Carolina, to 120 Grey Street, Danville, Virginia.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

HUBERT; OR, HOW NOT TO DO IT.

II.

Hubert, though he was quite an intelligent boy, and knew a great deal about many common things, was not by any means a good scholar at school. He was very much behind-hand in all his studies. He did not like study at all, nor books, nor teachers, nor anything that pertained to school in any way. He was very active in his plays, and in his various contrivances for amusing himself out of doors, or in a little place that he called his shop at his mother's while his mother was living; but, if he could have had his own way, he would never have gone into a school-room at all.

It was in the spring of the year that he came to live with his aunt, and Robert was beginning to make the garden. He went out one morning to see him. His aunt was there, with a large sun-bonnet on her head, giving directions.

"Hubert," said she, when she saw Hubert coming, "I think you had better not come into the garden much while Robert is making it. I am afraid you will interrupt Robert at his work."

"Oh, no, auntie," said Hubert. "I won't interrupt him. I'll help him, rather."

"Ah, I'm afraid not," said his aunt. "There is nothing so troublesome, when you

are at work in the garden, as a child about. They are always meddling with the tools and running over the beds."

"Why, aunt!" said Hubert. "Don't you suppose that I have got sense enough yet not to run over the beds?"

Hubert had become by this time somewhat better acquainted with his aunt than on the first day of his coming, and was less afraid in speaking to her.

"Well," said she, hesitatingly, and after a moment's pause, "you may stay a little while this morning; but, if he gives you any trouble, Robert, or interrupts you at your work, send him right out."

So saying, Mrs. Wood turned to go into the house, and Hubert was so much vexed at what she said that he felt impelled to relieve his feelings by making up a face at her behind her back as she went out. I don't wonder at his being a little vexed at finding her so continually inclined to take it for granted that he was a troublesome and bad boy, but he ought not to have made a face at her.

Hubert immediately went to work helping Robert all he could. He raked up the weeds which Robert threw out of the beds in spading them up, and then put them into a wheelbarrow and wheeled them away.

He brought Robert the tools which he wanted from time to time, and so saved him a good many steps. He, moreover, went on various errands for him, whenever and wherever Robert had occasion to send him.

After this Mrs. Wood, finding, through the account which Robert gave her, that Hubert, when in the garden, was a help and not a hindrance to him in his work, allowed him to go into the garden when he pleased. In about a week the garden was all laid out. The flower-beds were made, and some of them were sown, and the quarters intended for corn, potatoes, and other garden vegetables were arranged. Two rows of peas had been planted a week or two before, and were just beginning to show their heads above the ground.

The sight of these peas coming up awakened in Hubert a strong desire to set something growing himself.

"I wish aunt would let me have a garden," he said. "I mean to ask her the next time she comes out."

So he did; but his aunt shook her head, saying:—

"Oh, no, Hubert, my dear. I don't think that would be worth while. You see you would soon get tired of it, and it would all grow up to weeds."

Hubert looked disappointed.

"You see, Hubert dear," said his aunt, when she saw how disappointed he looked, "you won't care about it long, if you have a garden. Besides, you can see the flowers in my beds just as well as if they were in your own, and I shall give you some of them sometimes when you are a good boy. Then, as for weeding them and taking care of them, you can have plenty of that work to do on my beds whenever you wish, and that will be all the same thing."

Hubert thought it would not be the same thing at all, but he did not know exactly how to express the reason in words, and so he remained silent.

"At any rate," continued Mrs. Wood, "I could not let you have a bed in my garden, for we have to keep my garden especially nice. Robert is very particular about having everything in order in my beds."

"But, perhaps," she added, after a moment's pause, and then, after hesitating a moment, she turned to Robert, and said:

"You will reserve a piece of ground for your second planting of peas, I suppose, Robert."

"Yes, Mrs. Wood," said Robert. "I usually reserve two or three pieces of ground. We generally plant peas at least three times."

"Very well," said Mrs. Wood. "Then we can arrange it quite nicely. You can let Hubert have one of those reserved beds. And so, Hubert, you can have a good place for your garden as long as you will want it. You will get tired of it, you know, before the time comes for planting the peas, which won't be till three or four weeks from this, perhaps. That will be just what you would like, won't it, my dear?"

"But suppose I don't get tired of it," said Hubert, "and want to keep it?"

"There's no danger of that," said Mrs. Wood. "You will be tired of taking care of it and pulling up the weeds, long before that time. The little rogues grow very fast, and they come up by the million."

"But, auntie," said Hubert, "I have had a garden before, and kept it in order all summer, and gathered seeds from it in the fall."

"I don't know," said Mrs. Wood, shaking her head. "I have some doubts about the

order you kept it in. It might have been in what *you* would call good order. However, I won't say positively that you must give up your garden in three weeks. If I find you really do keep it nicely, I may be tempted to let you keep it longer."

"All summer?" asked Hubert.

"Well, I don't know about all summer," replied Mrs. Wood. "But we will see."

"Robert," she said, turning toward Robert, who was at work near, "suppose Hubert should give up his garden in the middle of the summer. Is there any seed that can be put in as late as that, that would come to anything?"

"I suppose we could raise some turnips upon it," said Robert.

"Very well, then," said Mrs. Wood, "you shall have your garden as long as you keep it in perfect order."

"You see, I am willing to indulge you in anything reasonable," Mrs. Wood added, "and to show you that I wish to do all I can to make you happy. I will come out day after to-morrow and help you arrange your garden, and give you my advice about the kind of seeds you had better sow in it. I shall be engaged to-day and to-morrow, but it will take you all that time to get your ground ready. You must dig it deep and rake it fine, and line it out perfectly straight and square at the sides and corners."

So saying, Mrs. Wood went away, leaving Robert to select a piece of ground.

As soon as his aunt had gone, Hubert sat down upon a seat by the side of the broad alley of the garden, to reflect upon what had been said and done.

"I've a great mind not to have any garden at all," he said in his vexation.—"Hubert," by Jacob Abbott.

NATURAL HISTORY.

CATS AND THEIR AFFECTIONS.

(Concluded.)

Cats are susceptible to little attentions such as spreading a rug or laying a cushion for them, and exceedingly tenacious of their rights of possession. Beside their baskets, each of mine has a cushion which is kept in one place, on which she is trained to lie, to prevent her covering the furniture with hairs. Only two have been completely broken to the habit, and Lalla has so exclusive a sense of property in hers, which

is in the corner of a sofa, that, if she sees a human being resting his head or elbow on it, she posts herself on the floor before him, looking him out of countenance until he moves. Once a visitor threw her cushion into a chair and sat on it. As he disregarded her mute protest, she walked away, but would not lie on it for a week afterwards. This jealousy of anything like a privilege or prerogative shows itself in them all.

It is a habit of the house, whenever there has been a wash day among the cats, to give them a party in the evening. They have bows on their necks, and are all brought to the drawing-room, where their balls are thrown to them; and, as they are always in a state of hilarious excitement when the first sleepiness of the bath goes off, a general frolic follows. Some of them do not like the bow at first and try to twitch it off, but soon come to take pride in it, like the bell-wether. Czarina, a true Parisian in that respect, had love of adornment and showed excessive complacency in her neck ribbon; but at her kittens' first party, when they ran to meet her, after kissing them in turn, she saw that each had a bow, and boxed their ears all round. She had a little brass and velvet collar with a bell which she was allowed to wear for the rest of the day after washing. When the bell was jingled, she would run and hold her neck to have the collar fastened, and then trot about to be seen and heard. She had a great deal of the love of admiration which I have observed in all cats.

Czarina was so used to exclamations of delight and admiration that, if she missed them from a visitor, she would circle up and solicit notice by the touch of a velvet paw. In her it seemed almost impersonal, as though she said, "You have not seen our cat." But in Princess, with all her dignity of character and deportment, it was a besetting sin; she must have her tribute from every man, woman, and beast, and she would resort to alien airs and graces to attract notice. Her most ludicrous attempt, was to fascinate a horse whose rider had stopped at the steps of a low terrace before the veranda. The master having duly complimented her, she walked toward the horse's head and began a display of feminine cajolery, at which the human spectators looked in speechless astonishment. The horse, whose head was turned toward her when she began the performance, presently

turned it away, on which she rose to her feet with an air of offended beauty that raised a shout of laughter and sent her into the house in open vexation.

Poor little Czarina was too simple for coquetry. She was not complex in character, and, though a mere bundle of nerves, she was not morbid, wayward, moody, or vindictive in the sense of cherishing a grudge. Indeed, she settled her grievances on the spot by a slap or scratch, and bore no malice. She showed little reflection except in gratifying her insatiable curiosity. One evening the arrival of some gay young people drove her upstairs in the wildest alarm; but, later, when they were playing games and singing in the drawing-room, she crept down to an adjoining room which was separated from it by a glass door, and tore a little hole in the muslin portière, through which I saw her peeping with distended eyes of fright and inquisitiveness. She ran any risk to see who entered the house, herself unseen. People, however, had less interest for her than parcels. It was a common thing for her to lift the lids of my band-boxes to see what was in them.

On one occasion several Christmas presents came to the house two or three days in advance, and according to custom I left them in my bedroom in the wrapping-paper, though Czarina coaxed and used all her blandishments to have them opened. On Christmas Eve, after being out for several hours, I went up to dress, and on the landing I met Czarina, Lalla Rookh, and Pig-wiggin coming out of my dark room in single file, with a furtive walk and demeanor. They passed me rapidly without recognition, slipped downstairs, and dispersed. On striking a light I found the paper torn from the parcels and scattered over the floor, some of the strings untied, and the pasteboard boxes clawed into peepholes. They must have been at work the whole afternoon. It was the only time I can remember Czarina joining the others in an escapade or expedition. She now and then ran races with them on the staircase and along the corridors; but she always lost her temper and played tag with her claws, which broke up the game. The others were fond of her, nevertheless,—Lalla in particular. Czarina showed some little liking for her as well as for Squall, and for Omar, her second husband, of whom all that need be said is that he is a fine, big, full-bred Angora from Paris,

but pried so oddly that he produced the effect of a cat masquerading as a Dominican friar, —an inveterate ruffler, and with no distinguishing characteristic except blood-thirstiness and *bonhomie*.

Czarina was the most helpless thing I ever saw at large. She would have starved in the Mouse Tower if not regularly fed, for she never caught anything more formidable than a moth. If she were ill, she would not allow herself to be put down for a moment, begging to be taken up like a sick child, and laying herself across my arms as a nurse carries a baby. She had endless caresses and endearments: the contrast of alternate gentleness, wildness, and dependence, of primitive indocility, passionate love for one human being, together with her beauty, grace, and perennial kittenhood, made her the most beloved and the most bewitching of pets. During a serious illness which kept me upstairs for six weeks, she would not leave my couch even for food. When called to meals, she would run to the head of the stairs, then back to my bedroom, where she would wait for hours to have it brought. Her only absence was for her daily outings, even the summer moonlight failing to tempt her away.

The first time that I went downstairs and lay in my little morning-room, her joy knew no bounds. She tramped to and fro on the sofa, gave me scores of kisses, lay down over and over again, and got up the next instant to come and rub her head against my cheek, finally curling herself on my breast with a paw touching my chin, gazing at me with eyes of supreme love and felicity. Thenceforth, if I were confined to my bed for a day or two, she showed uneasiness, and at once installed herself there, nestling close with one little paw slipped into the palm of my hand. My absence caused her such anguish that I used every means to prevent her seeing the luggage; but she grew to understand other preparations, and would go about the house mewing, contrary to her wont, for she was a silent cat. One day, when the hour of departure had come, her restlessness and suspicion reached a climax, and she followed the men servants, from whom she habitually fled, into the room where the trunks stood packed and locked. Going up to give a last order, I saw her walking round them in feverish circles until the last box was carried down, when she was suddenly lost in wild, white

gyrations, and rolled on the floor in convulsions, a shapeless, silky heap. After this crisis I dreaded my next journey more than I like to confess; but, when it drew near, she had a litter of which she was fond, and I trusted that they would divert and console her. On the last evening I was packing in an unoccupied room, and she slipped in behind a maid, and began to mew and rub herself against the luggage with growing agitation. Presently she disappeared, but came back lugging her favorite kitten, jumped with it into the trunk into which I was stooping, curled herself in a corner, and looked up with beseeching eyes and a plaintive look, as if to say, "Take us, too." Poor, loving, tameless little heart! It has ceased to beat, and these pages are a debt to two whose fidelity never failed.

I might have given more individuality to the different cats whom I have found remarkable—to Princess in character and what must be called conscience; M'liss in versatility and ingenuity; Lalla Rookh in sagacity and superiority to the weaknesses of her race; Czarina in the self-forgetting passion of attachment—by a separate biography of each. But my object has been rather to illustrate the peculiarities of the species and show the difference in personality and intelligence to be found among them. Many of the anecdotes may seem trivial, but they are indicative, and the result of almost twenty years' close observation without original predilection. They may help to dispel some superstitions and prejudices, and to call attention to qualities and capabilities which raise the cat to the rank of a friend of man, though on a lower grade than the dog, and tend to prove her possession of a moral nature akin to that which invests the human soul with sacredness.—*S. B. Wister, in Temple Bar.*

FRANCES POWER COBBE.

VII.

I do not think that any one can regret having been brought up as an Evangelical Christian.

I speak of the mild, devout, philanthropic Arminianism of the Clapham School, which prevailed amongst pious people in England and Ireland from the beginning of the century till the rise of the Oxford movement, and of which William Wilberforce and Lord Shaftesbury were successively representa-

tives. To this school my parents belonged. All our relatives, far and near, so far as I have ever heard, were the same. We had five archbishops and a bishop among our near kindred,—Cobbe, Beresfords, and Trenchs, great-grandfather, uncle, and cousins,—and (as I have narrated) my father's ablest brother, my godfather, was a clergyman.

My earliest recollections include the lessons of both my father and mother in religion. I can almost feel myself now kneeling at my dear mother's knees repeating the Lord's Prayer after her clear, sweet voice. Then came learning the magnificent Collects, to be repeated to my father on Sunday mornings in his study, and later the church catechism and a great many hymns. Sunday was kept exceedingly strictly at Newbridge in those days; and no books were allowed except religious ones, nor any amusements save a walk after church. Thus there was abundant time for reading the Bible and looking over the pictures in various large editions, and in Calmet's great folio dictionary, beside listening to the sermon in church and to another sermon which my father read in the evening to the assembled household. Of course, every day of the week there were morning prayers in the library, and a "Short Discourse" from good, prosy old Jay, of Bath's "Exercises." In this way altogether I received a good deal of direct religious instruction, beside very frequent reference to God and duty and heaven, in the ordinary talk of my parents with their children.

What was the result of this training? I can only suppose that my nature was a favorable soil for such seed, for it took root early and grew apace. I cannot recall any time when I could not have been described by any one who knew my little heart (I was very shy about it, and few, if any, did know it) as a very religious child. Religious ideas were, from the first, intensely interesting and exciting to me. In great measure I fancy it was the element of the sublime in them which moved me first, just as I was moved by the thunder and the storm, and was wont to go out alone into the woods or into the long, solitary corridors to enjoy them more fully. I recollect being stirred to rapture by a little poem which I can repeat to this day, beginning:—

"Where is Thy dwelling-place?
Is it in the realms of space,

By angels and just spirits only trod?
Or is it in the bright
And ever-burning light
Of the sun's flaming disk that Thou art
throned, O God?"

One of the stanzas suggested that the divine seat might be in some region of the starry universe:—

"Far in the unmeasured, unimagined Heaven,
So distant that its light
Could never reach our sight
Though with the speed of thought for endless ages driven."

Ideas like these used to make my cheek turn pale and lift me as if on wings, and naturally religion was the great storehouse of them. But I think, even in childhood, there was in me a good deal beside, of the *moral*, if not yet the *spiritual*, element of real religion. Of course the great beauty and glory of evangelical Christianity, its thorough amalgamation of the ideas of duty and devotion (elsewhere often so lamentably distinct), was very prominent in my parents' lessons. God was always to me the All-seeing Judge. His eye looking into my heart and beholding all its naughtiness and little duplicities (which of course I was taught to consider serious sins) was so familiar a conception that I might be said to live and move in the sense of it. Thus my life in childhood morally was much the same as it is physically to live in a room full of sunlight. Later on, the evils which belong to this evangelical training, the excessive self-introspection and self-consciousness, made themselves painfully felt; but in early years there was nothing that was not perfectly wholesome in the religion which I had so readily assimilated.

Further, I was, as I have said, a very happy child, even conscious of my own happiness; and gratitude to God or man has always come to me as a sentiment enhancing my enjoyment of the good for which I have been thankful. Thus I was—not conventionally merely—but genuinely and spontaneously grateful to the Giver of all the pleasures which were poured on my head. I think I may say that I *loved* God when I was quite a young child. I can even remember being dimly conscious that my good father and mother performed their religious exercises more as a duty, whereas to me such things, so far as I could understand them, were real *pleasures*, like being taken to see somebody I loved. I have since

recognized that both my parents were in evangelical parlance, "under the law," while in my childish heart the germ of the mysterious New Life was already planted. I think my mother was aware of something of the kind and looked with a little wonder, blended with her tenderness, at my violent outbursts of penitence and at my strange fancy for reading the most serious books in my play-hours. My brothers had not exhibited any such symptoms, but then they were healthy school-boys, always engaged eagerly in their natural sports and pursuits, while I was a lonely, dreaming girl.

When I was seven years old, my father undertook to read the "Pilgrim's Progress" to my brothers, then aged from twelve to eighteen, and I was allowed to sit in the room, and provided with a slate and sums. The sums, it appeared, were never worked, while my eyes were fixed in absorbed interest on the reader, evening after evening. Once or twice, when the delightful old copy of Bunyan was left about after the lesson, my slate was covered with drawings of Apollyon and Great Heart which were pronounced "wonderful for the child." By the time Christian had come to the Dark River all pretence of arithmetic was abandoned, and I was permitted, proud and enchanted, to join the group of boys and listen with my whole soul to the marvellous tale. When the reading was over, my father gave the volume (which had belonged to his grandmother) to me, for my "very own"; and I read it over and over continually for years, till the idea it is meant to convey—life a progress to Heaven—was engraved indelibly on my mind. It seems to me that few of those who have praised Bunyan most loudly have recognized that he was not only a great religious genius, but a born poet, a Puritan-Tinker-Shelley, possessed of what is almost the highest gift of poetry, the sense of the analogy between outward nature and the human soul. He used allegory instead of metaphor, a clumsier vehicle by far; but it carried the same exquisite thoughts. I have the dear old book still, and it is one of my treasures, with its ineffably quaint old woodcuts and its delicious marginal notes; as, for example, when "Giant Despair" is said to be unable one day to maul the pilgrims in his dungeon because he had fits. "For sometimes," says Bunyan, "in sunshiny weather Giant Despair has fits." My father wrote on

the fly-leaf of the blessed old book these still legible words:—

1830.

"This book, which belonged to my grandmother, was given as a present to my dear daughter Fanny upon witnessing her delight in reading it. May she keep the celestial City steadfastly in view; may she surmount the dangers and trials she must meet with on the road; and, finally, be reunited with those she loved on earth in singing praises for ever and ever to Him who loved them and gave Himself for them, is the fervent prayer of her affectionate father,

CHARLES COBBE."

LETTERS OF A SISTER.

To her Brother, James Freeman Clarke.

NEWTON, Jan. 7. 1839.

My dear James,—I have been waiting for a letter from you till I am tired. What has become of you? I hope you don't mean to send all your letters to Meadville. Mother fancies that you are coming back directly and says she shan't be surprised.

Margaret* says you left your caricatures on her table, and that it was a just punishment on you for reading "Each and All" to the Green Street children. I was pleased to hear that her exclusiveness had been so punished.

Friday, 8th.—This morning your letter to mother came, and one from William, who has been quite sick, but who rejoices in your happiness in a strain of true feeling. Mother was enchanted with the part of your letter relating to Mr. H., as indeed were the rest of us. I think if you had been a worshipper of the god of this world, he could not have been kinder to you; or, to speak more wisely, let us thank the Father that *He* has guided you into a path so pleasant, which still leads upward, and has given you a fair spirit for companion.

Just after you were gone a letter came for you from William [G.] Eliot, which I opened, thinking he might have wanted you to do something for him in Boston; but it was a letter of friendship purely, and, having opened it, I could do no less than answer it, which I did. I will send it to you in the first package that goes. He too gives you joy as a brother and hopes he does not tire

* Margaret Fuller.

you with his expressions of affection. I saw Mr. Pease a moment, who saw you in Philadelphia, but knew not much about you.

Miss Dorothea Dix or Miss *D. L. Dix* has subscribed for the *Messenger* and paid. I told her you would be happy to send it to her in exchange for the magazine of Mr. Thom, but she said she chose to subscribe, and, when she was a little richer, should take two copies. She requests you to acknowledge the receipt of it in a letter to me, and by no means to mention her in the *Messenger*. Send her the January number to begin with, and direct it to Miss Dorothea L. Dix, care of Joseph S. Francis, bookseller, Boston.

I am getting on finely in the water colors. It is just what I want, I think; but I regret so much that I did not know it when I went with you to Louisville. I could then have sketched to some purpose. However, I shall show you how, next summer. You will like it because it is not in the least mechanical, and requires more thought than anything else. If it is not done right at first, it cannot be repaired by a succession of touches and washes. Consequently it is the best possible exercise of one's powers. I shall send you some specimens of the splashing style in which we begin, by which is shown the difference between a splash and a daub, between a ragged intelligent touch and a smooth, unmeaning stroke.

The lectures* continue, and are so different one from the other that I always wish you could hear them all. The other night he gave us the doctrine and discipline of *Love*, in a lecture wherein he supposed nothing, nor set down aught but the sincerest experience, except, I might say, the poetic view of Love. He quoted Wordsworth's "Ode to May," one stanza,—the last, I should think. He thinks, as might be expected, that the office of Love is to destroy personality by a voluntary surrendering one's individuality a sacrifice to the loved object; and it begins its work by making so much of persons. In describing the first bright joy of love, he made the most exquisite apology for certain ungracious words he had said in another place about *persons*.

The final accomplishment of this good work of becoming impersonal, he thought, arrived when two persons who truly loved had lived in the same house for forty years, and melted their habits as well as feelings

into one. The next is to be on Genius; and before it (the course) is done, we are to have "The Church." Mrs. Sam. Ripley told me he said the Church *must come*, and sighed as he said it. He hates to provoke people so, I am convinced, yet conscientiously does it. Another one is to be "The Tragedy of Life."

I am told Mr. N. has it, at last, from Mr. Brownson, for all his offences, and particularly for his attack on Mr. Emerson and you.

Your sweet Anna is very kind in her invitation, but I should think it better to leave you together for a while undisturbed by the presence of any third person until you have together arranged your mode of life. I should be very happy to be her guest at a somewhat more distant period and think with pleasant anticipations of staying with you and sharing your joy. I have thought of writing to her; but it places one in a somewhat false position to do that to one whom you have never seen, I think, except it is some great *impersonation* like Wordsworth or Carlyle, which I take it your Anna is not, as yet. Mrs. Ripley was much disappointed not to see you at Mr. Emerson's that day, and wishes much to become acquainted with you.

Your ever true sister,

SARAH.

HOW TO LIFT A CAT.

It is a mistaken idea that the proper way to lift a full-grown cat is by the nape of its neck without supporting the lower part of its body with the other hand. It is true that the mother cat carries young kittens by grasping in her mouth the loose skin at the back of her offspring's neck; but a tiny kitten is a very different matter from a large cat, and, indeed, the only way to lift a kitten without squeezing or hurting its soft little body is to lift it by its neck. But after it has grown larger its own weight is too great to be supported by such a bit of skin and fur as is so grasped by the hand, and many a cat suffers perfect torture by being held in this manner and is quite helpless to run or struggle, as in such a position certain of its muscles cannot be controlled, and it is absolutely at the mercy of its unconscious tormenter.

The same rule should be observed in lifting rabbits by their ears. They should always be partially supported by the free hand and not allowed to dangle with their

* Mr. Emerson's.

whole weight straining from their large but necessarily delicate ears.—*The Animals' Friend Supplement, London.*

THE ATTENTION OF ALL READERS OF "THE CHEERFUL LETTER" IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE:—

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to our secretary, Mrs. L. B. Porter.

Any minister (of any sect) who receives this paper is invited to write to our headquarters (see address on this page) and give names and addresses of those who may be cheered and helped by becoming our correspondents.

No *theology* is disseminated in our paper. All the religious matter is intended merely to strengthen, cheer, and comfort those in need of such practical help.

Givers of books are reminded that only books of an instructive or wholesome nature should be offered in the Book Club. Classics, educational works, and standard novels are always acceptable. Do not offer odd numbers of periodicals.

If we are Christians, we shall love all souls, calling no man common or unclean, believing in the brotherhood of the race, finding something good in every one,—a vital seed of nobleness in the most deadened bosom.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

In sending requests or offers of books, it is essential to address these communications to Mrs. W. B. Nichols. If addressed to the Editor, these letters are in some cases postponed, in others altogether omitted. See directions in every number of *The Cheerful Letter*.

If it is not permitted us to believe all things, we can at least hope them. Despair is infidelity and death. Temporally and spiritually, the declaration of inspiration holds good,—"*We are saved by hope.*"—*Whittier.*

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

Headquarters of the Cheerful Letter Exchange are at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The secretary, Mrs. L. B. Porter, may be found there on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays.

The February meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange will be held at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., on Friday, February 1, at 10.30 A.M. All interested are cordially invited to attend.

HEREAFTER, ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS, INTENDED FOR THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE, "CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE, 25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON, MASS." THIS INCLUDES SUBSCRIPTIONS, CHANGES OF ADDRESS, REQUESTS FOR DISCONTINUANCE, BEGGING LETTERS RECEIVED BY MEMBERS OR BRANCHES.

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Arrangements will be made for lessons by correspondence in any school subject for those who are unable to leave their homes or who are far from centres of education.

Will those who would like to receive such instruction please send requests to Mrs. Ruth Peterson, 37 Ridgemont Street, Allston, Mass.

Those who send reading matter to the soldiers in the Philippine Islands are reminded that *current* periodicals and good, bright, standard novels are the kind of reading desired. Do not send *old* magazines, nor periodicals adapted especially for women. Numbers of periodicals issued within a year may be sent.

Chairman, Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 80 Goffe Street, Quincy, Mass.

Secretary, Mrs. Lily Blunt Porter, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

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